



## SEVP InFocus Webinar

### Dec. 14, 2016

### Webinar Script

#### Slide 1: Pre-Webinar Title Slide

*[Adobe Connect room opens approximately 15 minutes prior to webinar. Slide 1 displays until the start of the webinar at 2 p.m. EST]*

#### Slide 2: Title Slide

##### LAUREN:

- Good afternoon everybody!
- I'm Lauren Caricato and I'd like to welcome you to today's SEVP InFocus Webinar.
- As we get started, please take a moment to complete our attendance poll at the bottom of your screen. We're going to hold several polls during today's webinar to get your opinion on new resources and hot topics. Your responses help inform our communication efforts, so we really appreciate your input.
- I'll be your moderator for today's webinar. I'm joined by our regular SEVP InFocus presenters Marissa Tinsley and Tandice Ghajar, and also by Sanna Serspinski and Anisha Woodley, our presenters for today's special segment on the recent pathway programs guidance.
- Thanks everybody for joining us. Presenters, could you briefly introduce yourselves to our viewers?

#### Slide 3: Today's Presenters

##### MARISSA:

- My name is Marissa Tinsley and I started working at SEVP in 2010 in the School Certification Unit doing Initial certifications. I later transferred to my current position on the Strategic Communications Team, where I now work with Tandice.



## TANDICE:

- Hi everyone; I am Tandice Ghajar and I'm also on the SEVP Strategic Communications Team. I used to work in SEVP's compliance unit and also did some policy-related work. My primary focus is student issues.

## SANNA:

- Hi everyone, my name is Sanna Serspinski and I first started as a field representative in Tennessee, and then in Arlington, Virginia. I then transferred to SEVP Policy, where I now work as a senior policy analyst.

## ANISHA:

- Good afternoon everyone, my name is Anisha Woodley. Since 2010, I have served as an adjudicator with the School Certification Unit.

## Slide 4: Presentation Overview

### LAUREN:

- Thanks, everyone. As you can see on our agenda, we have a lot to cover. But before we begin, I want to mention two quick housekeeping notes:
  - Please download and take a look at our [hyperlink appendix](#), which contains links to all of the web pages mentioned during this presentation. You can access it on the right-hand side of your screen.
  - Second, a **recording** of today's presentation and webinar transcript will be available shortly on the Study in the States [Stakeholder Webinars](#) page. If any of your colleagues weren't able to join us today, direct them to the recording after the webinar.

## Slide 5: The Latest News

### LAUREN:

- With that out of the way, let's start with the latest news from SEVP. Tandice, didn't the comment period for a policy guidance document close a few days ago?



## Slide 6: Interim Final Policy Guidance — Evidence for Schools Not Meeting Eligibility Criteria

### TANDICE:

- You're right, Lauren. The comment period for interim final policy guidance on evidence for schools not meeting eligibility criteria listed in the regulation closed two days ago, on Monday, December 12.

### LAUREN:

- "Evidence for schools not meeting eligibility criteria" certainly sounds like policy-speak. Could you translate this for our viewers who might not be familiar with the term?

### TANDICE:

- Sure thing. Federal regulation explains that a school is eligible for SEVP certification if it meets certain requirements, such as being accredited by a nationally-recognized accrediting body. However, some schools petitioning for SEVP certification may meet other eligibility requirements, but might not have this accreditation.
- We released this interim final guidance to help our adjudicators review and evaluate the types of evidence schools in these situations submit to SEVP.

### LAUREN:

- You mentioned the guidance was in interim final form — that means SEVP will review stakeholder comments, correct?

### TANDICE:

- Yes, that's true. SEVP policy officials will review all stakeholder comments on the guidance, and revise the guidance, if necessary. Remember, interim final policy guidance is official SEVP policy guidance, which is now being used by adjudicators. Schools need to follow this guidance. You can read the guidance on the Schools page at [ICE.gov/SEVP](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVP) under Policy.

### LAUREN:

- And, if you missed the opportunity to submit comments for this guidance document, I strongly encourage you to sign up to receive alerts about all SEVP guidance documents,



whether they're draft, interim final or final. You can do this on [Study in the States](#) — the page hyperlink is in the [hyperlink appendix](#) for you to access.

## Slide 7: Form I-17 Filing Evidence Process — What DSOs Need to Know

### LAUREN:

- OK, now staying on the subject of evidence, I heard there are some changes coming about how schools upload and submit evidence to SEVP. Marissa, since you're familiar with the School Certification Unit, could you tell us a bit about this new process and plans for the future?

### MARISSA:

- Of course. In October 2015, SEVP implemented a new filing process for Form I-17 updates. This means that DSOs must provide evidence at the time they submit an update in SEVIS.
- For now, DSOs should scan and email evidence documents to SEVP. We've listed the email addresses for submitting evidence on this slide.
- In the future, SEVP will deploy a SEVIS release that allows DSOs to upload evidence directly into SEVIS. This will help streamline the evidence upload and review process, and hopefully reduce the need for SEVP to send requests for evidence to schools.

### LAUREN:

- That's great news — I know stakeholders have been excited about this functionality for a while!

## Slide 8: Poll Question

### LAUREN:

- Alright, let's take a brief break and get insight from those of you watching live — we want to know: were you aware of the changes to the Form I-17 filing process? Select yes or no through the poll feature on your screen.
- Thanks everyone, looks like a lot of people were already aware of this change.



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## MARISSA:

- I want to jump in here quickly, Lauren, since it looks like some folks may not know about this new process. If you were unaware of these changes, or have questions about the type of evidence you need to submit, I strongly encourage you to visit the Schools section on [ICE.gov/SEVP](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVP).

## LAUREN:

- Thanks for that tip, Marissa. And, the link to the Schools section on [ICE.gov/SEVP](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVP) is available in your [hyperlink appendix](#).

## Slide 9: SEVP Portal — Prepare Now

## LAUREN:

- Let's move on to another hot topic for our stakeholders. During our last SEVP InFocus Webinar, we introduced the SEVP Portal as a new tool for students on post-completion OPT to enter certain personal information. However, there have been some developments related to the SEVP Portal since our last webinar.
- Tandice, can you give us the latest news?

## TANDICE:

- Sure thing, Lauren. As I'm sure many of our stakeholders are aware, the SEVP Portal will no longer launch this month. SEVP plans to deploy the portal as part of an early 2017 SEVIS release.
- On that note, there haven't been any changes to planned SEVP Portal functionality. Through the portal, certain students will still be able to edit their personal and employer information.

## LAUREN:

- Good to know – the schedule changed a bit, but nothing else did.



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**TANDICE:**

- Yep! And I also want to mention that DSOs should continue to prepare for the launch of the SEVP Portal by ensuring all student email addresses listed in SEVIS are accurate and up to date.
- Remember, students will need a working email address to create an SEVP Portal account.

**LAUREN:**

- Thanks, Tandice. SEVP will continue to communicate information about the portal as we get closer to the release date. Until then, stakeholders can stay tuned to [Study in the States](#) for the latest news.

## **Slide 10: Notifications and Follow-up**

**LAUREN:**

- Okay, let's transition into our next section, which will provide updates and follow ups to topics discussed during previous SEVP InFocus Webinars.
- Tandice, you were discussing policy guidance earlier in this presentation; why don't you tell us about the other guidance documents SEVP is working on?

## **Slide 11: Upcoming Policy Guidance**

**TANDICE:**

- Of course, Lauren! Our policy team has been quite busy and is currently working on several different guidance documents, which we've listed on the slide. I want to highlight a couple of documents, including:
  - Annual vacation and school breaks for F-1 and M-1 students;
  - Definition of the academic year; and
  - Several guidance documents regarding student employment.
- I do want to note, though, that SEVP does not have a specific timeline for the release of these guidance documents. However, like Lauren mentioned earlier, anyone can sign up to receive notice when SEVP posts new guidance through the Study in the States [Guidance for Comment](#) page. This link is in your [hyperlink appendix](#).



## Slide 12: SEVIS Enhancements

### LAUREN:

- Thanks, Tandice. Let's go ahead and switch gears to SEVIS. We mentioned earlier that SEVP is preparing for a SEVIS release this month. Marissa, can you tell us more about it?

### MARISSA:

- Sure thing. SEVIS Release 6.31 will deploy this coming Sunday, December 18. The release will introduce the features listed on your screen.
- I want to point out that this release will include the ability for DSOs to upload supporting evidence for correction requests in SEVIS. However, due to virus scanning issues, the implementation of this functionality will be delayed. Until the functionality is turned on, users will see the link to upload evidence, but will not be able to click it. We'll notify users when they can begin providing evidence for correction requests through SEVIS.

### LAUREN

- Just to reiterate — DSOs, you'll be able to see the link to upload evidence, but you won't be able to click on it until SEVP turns on the functionality. We'll be sure to notify you when this feature is available.
- And, as always, stakeholders can visit the [SEVIS Help Hub](#) on Study in the States for information about upcoming SEVIS releases and webinars. That link is included in your [hyperlink appendix](#).
- Tandice, what's going on with the SEVP field representatives?

## Slide 13: SEVP Field Representative Updates

### TANDICE:

- Well, Lauren, we currently have several SEVP field representative vacancies. If your school is located in one of the territories listed on this slide, you currently do not have an SEVP field representative assigned to your area and will need to contact the SRC for assistance.
- However, if you notice an asterisk next to your territory, that means that SEVP expects to hire and deploy a field representative to your area in spring 2017. Keep an eye on [Study in](#)



[the States](#) and social media for additional information about your field representative's deployment.

**LAUREN:**

- Thanks, Tandice. I just want to reiterate — if you're a school official in one of these territories — make sure you contact the SRC with any questions. We've included the SRC's contact information in the [hyperlink appendix](#) and at the end of this presentation for your reference.

**LAUREN:**

- Marissa, any other news that we should be aware of?

## Slide 14: Redesigned FMJFee.com

**MARISSA:**

- Actually, I want to draw everyone's attention to the updated [FMJFee.com](#).

**LAUREN:**

- That's the website that students use to pay their I-901 SEVIS Fee, right?

**MARISSA:**

- Yes it is. You can see a screenshot of the [FMJFee.com](#) home page on your screen now. SEVP recently refreshed the design of the website to make it more user-friendly and easier to navigate. We've also updated our I-901 SEVIS Fee Payment Tutorial on [Study in the States](#) to reflect these changes.
- Additionally, users can now pay their I-901 SEVIS Fee and check the status of their I-901 SEVIS Fee payment from their mobile phone.

**LAUREN:**

- That's a great new feature. DSOs, make sure to tell your prospective international students that they can both pay and check the status of their I-901 SEVIS Fee payment on their mobile phone — that's super convenient. Also, that link to the I-901 SEVIS Fee Payment Tutorial is in your [hyperlink appendix](#).





## Slide 15: Poll Question

### LAUREN:

- Sticking with the subject of [FMJFee.com](http://FMJFee.com), it's time for another poll question.
- We want to know if you've had a chance to visit the updated [FMJFee.com](http://FMJFee.com). Select yes or no using the poll feature on your screen.
- Thank you to everyone who is taking this poll. It looks like a lot of people haven't had the opportunity to visit the new website, which makes sense since it's primarily used by international students.

### LAUREN:

- Thanks for responding, everyone. And, if you haven't visited the updated [FMJFee.com](http://FMJFee.com), I strongly encourage you to do so after the webinar. Once again, that link is included in your [hyperlink appendix](#).

## Slide 16: Don't Forget

### LAUREN:

- As we enter the holiday season, many folks are probably preparing for winter vacation and looking forward to a break from school. However, even while students are away for the holidays, there's still some very important information that DSOs should be aware of.
- Tandice, can you please share some helpful reminders for our DSOs out there?

## Slide 17: PDSO/DSO Annual Verification — Verify Your School Officials

### TANDICE:

- Well, all school officials should be aware that the PDSO/DSO Annual Verification period began on December 2. All PDSOs need to log into SEVIS and verify that all current SEVIS users:
  - Are still employed by the organization and serve as a PDSO or DSO; and
  - Require continued SEVIS access.
- School officials should hopefully be familiar with this process, which occurs every year. Remember, schools that fail to complete the verification process will lose SEVIS access.



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**LAUREN:**

- Can you please remind schools how long they have to complete the verification?

**TANDICE:**

- The verification period ends on March 2, 2017. School officials logging into SEVIS will see a reminder until their PDSO completes the verification.

**LAUREN:**

- Good to know. PDSOs, if you haven't already completed the annual verification, make sure you do so before you leave or soon after you return from the holidays. This is certainly something that you will not want to forget.

**TANDICE:**

- That's right, Lauren; if school officials need help with this process, they can visit the [SEVIS Help Hub](#) for more information.

**LAUREN:**

- Thanks for that resource, Tandice. Sticking on the subject of preparing for the holidays, what are some other tips that school officials should be aware of, Marissa?

## Slide 18: Holiday Break — Tips and Reminders for DSOs

**MARISSA:**

- The period after the holidays is often busy with students returning to campus and the start of classes. However, school officials should always remember to register Continuing and Initial students in SEVIS within 30 days of the start of the new academic session.

**LAUREN:**

- That's certainly something important to remember. DSOs, while you're thinking about it, write a reminder or mark your calendars to complete this action at the start of the new session.
- Anything else DSOs should know about?



## **Slide 19: Holiday Break — Tips and Reminders for DSOs**

### **MARISSA:**

- I'm sure many students have plans to travel over the holiday break. SEVP strongly recommends that DSOs ensure that their students are prepared for international travel. This can involve providing students with simple tips, such as making sure that they remember to travel with proper documentation and DSO contact information.

### **LAUREN:**

- That's great advice, Marissa. The port of entry can be a confusing place, so students should definitely make sure that they understand about what can happen during primary and secondary inspection.
- Staying on the subject of travel-related reminders, I think we have some reminders about the Form I-515A next. Tandice, what should school officials remember?

## **Slide 20: The Form I-515A — Reminders and Updates**

### **TANDICE:**

- Well, Lauren, with so many students traveling through U.S. ports of entry this winter, it's possible, maybe even likely, that a few of your students may receive a Form I-515A. If one of your students receives one, you should help the student respond to the Form I-515A and not create a new SEVIS record. If you were to create a new SEVIS record, in this situation, the student must depart and re-enter the United States on the new SEVIS record for the record to become valid.

### **LAUREN:**

- That's good to know. Remember DSOs, it's always better to respond to a Form I-515A than create a new SEVIS record for the student.
- Anything else that DSOs should be aware of?

### **TANDICE:**

- School officials should remember that SEVP sends an "Intent to Terminate" notice to students and/or their dependents after we fail to receive any response to the Form I-515A.



This notice gives students an additional 14 days as of the date the letter is sent to respond to the Form I-515A either:

- By submitting a complete Form I-515A and supporting paperwork, or
- By leaving the United States.
- If after this second opportunity to submit the documentation the student still fails to comply, SEVP will terminate the student's record in SEVIS.

#### **LAUREN:**

- Great information, Tandice. As we mentioned earlier, DSOs, please make sure you prepare your students for the port of entry — this will help them avoid receiving a Form I-515A. If your student does receive a Form I-515A, make sure to help them respond to the form, rather than create a new record for the student in SEVIS.

### **Slide 21: Facts + Figures**

#### **LAUREN:**

- With those tips out of the way, let's move onto our next section. Just last week, [Study in the States](#) launched a new home page, which we'll talk about later in this presentation. To complement the launch, we want to highlight some data and statistics from [Study in the States](#). Marissa, can you share some interesting facts and statistics with our attendees?

### **Slide 22: Showcasing Study in the States — Site Visitors**

#### **MARISSA:**

- Yes; we'll start by taking a look at how many people visited [Study in the States](#) each month — on this slide you can see the number of visitors from August to November 2016. It's important to note that, on average, more than 100,000 users visit the site each month, so this site really is a great resource for students and school officials about the international student process.



## Slide 23: Showcasing Study in the States — Top Countries

### MARISSA:

- Moving on to this next slide, you'll see the top five countries that drove traffic to [Study in the States](#) in November 2016. As you might imagine, visitors from the United States drove the most site traffic, followed by users from India, Nigeria, the United Kingdom and Canada.

## Slide 24: Showcasing Study in the States — Top Pages

### MARISSA:

- Finally, I want to take a look at the most-visited pages on Study in the States — these are the top pages that people are visiting. For November, our [School Search](#) page was the number one most-visited page, followed by the [Paying Your I-901 SEVIS Fee](#) page and the [What is the Form I-20](#) page.

### LAUREN:

- Those are some great statistics, Marissa. DSOs, these top pages are great resources to send to any prospective students. This slide also shows that many visitors discovered [Study in the States](#) through our government partner websites, including EducationUSA and USCIS — websites that you might want to refer your students to.

## Slide 25: Special Segment — Pathway Programs

### LAUREN:

- Now on to the portion of our presentation that I'm sure many of you all have been eagerly awaiting — our special segment on pathway programs. As many of you are aware, SEVP released final policy guidance on pathway programs in October 2016.
- Sanna and Anisha, let's kick it off!



## **Slide 26: Poll Question**

### **SANNA:**

- Thanks, Lauren. Before we get into the policy guidance, let's start with a brief poll. How many folks watching today either have a pathway program at their school, or are thinking about adding a pathway program? Please respond using the poll feature.
- Thank you for taking the poll.

## **Slide 27: Pathway Programs Guidance Series — Background**

### **SANNA:**

- We'll start by providing some background on the pathway programs guidance series before diving into each guidance document. SEVP developed final policy guidance documents on conditional admission, English proficiency, and pathway programs over a three-year period.
  - This guidance development process involved an ongoing dialogue with the academic community to discuss the application of pathway programs.
- In 2013 and 2014, SEVP released draft policy guidance for public comment. In 2013, we released a draft guidance document on bridge programs and conditional admission, and in 2014, we released three revised draft guidance documents on conditional admission, English proficiency and pathway programs. In total, the guidance series received 100 public comments.
- We will continue to review stakeholder feedback to address the application of pathway programs in the field.

## **Slide 28: Final Policy Guidance Overview — Conditional Admission and English Proficiency on the Form I-20**

### **ANISHA:**

- We'll start with discussing the first two final policy guidance documents that SEVP released this past July on conditional admission and the English proficiency field on the Form I-20.
- The policy guidance document on conditional admission contains two definitions:



- Conditional admission, which is defined as an agreement between a school and a student to tentatively admit the student into a program of study for which the student does not meet all standards for admission; and
- Standards for admission, which is defined as a set of established criteria a prospective student must meet to gain admittance to a program of study
- There are several key things that school officials need to know related to this guidance:
  - DSOs should only issue a Form I-20 when a student meets all standards for admission to the program of study. The standards for admission include any English proficiency requirements.
  - DSOs should ensure correct Form I-20 issuance, including completion of the English proficiency field. Instructions for completing the English proficiency field are included in the SEVP final policy guidance.
  - Additionally, DSOs should note evidence in the student's record demonstrating that the student met all standards for admission, including English proficiency. DSOs should also keep an account of how the school determined the student's need for language instruction and how it determined the most suitable means for providing instruction.

## **Slide 29: Final Policy Guidance Overview — Pathway Programs**

### **SANNA:**

- SEVP released final guidance on pathway programs for reasons of English proficiency on October 28, 2016. This guidance comprised the third of the three-part policy guidance series mentioned earlier.
- The guidance defines a pathway program as a “postsecondary program of study combining credit-bearing and developmental ESL coursework to prepare a student who is unable to meet English proficiency standards for admission.” We simplified the terminology for pathway programs from previous guidance documents by removing the terms “bridge” and “bridged degree program.”
- However, it's important to note that the guidance does not address the following topics:
  - Pathway programs unrelated to English proficiency,
  - Reduced course load for academic difficulties,
  - Concurrent enrollment, and



- Developmental ESL coursework during a student's orientation period.
- We also released a fact sheet with this guidance to explain how DSOs should add a pathway program to their Form I-17 and correctly issue a Form I-20 for a pathway program.

## Slide 30: Next Steps — Pathway Programs

### ANISHA:

- Now that the guidance is released, DSOs are probably wandering about next steps for both schools and SEVP. Remember, the final policy guidance released in October 2016 applies as of the effective date for all pathway programs started or approved on or after that date. Schools with a currently certified pathway program must comply with the policy guidance standards for pathway programs by October 28, 2017.
- Additionally, DSOs should:
  - Ensure the Form I-17 reflects the school's current operations and programs, and
  - Submit a Form I-17 update to add a pathway program, if needed.
- We'll continue to review this guidance, and make adjustments, if necessary. We encourage stakeholders to provide your feedback on this guidance to [SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@ice.dhs.gov). All comments are directed to members of our policy team, like Sanna.

## Slide 31: Pre-Submitted Question

### LAUREN:

- Thanks to you both for that information. Let's move into our question and answer portion of the presentation. Before we get started, I just want to remind everyone our presenters will not take live questions during the webinar. We asked stakeholders to send in their questions related to the pathway programs guidance before the webinar, and identified the top ten frequently asked questions to address.

### SANNA:

- Also, I want to note that many folks might have follow-up questions from today's webinar. Please continue to direct your questions regarding pathway programs to the SRC.





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**LAUREN:**

- Thanks for that information, Sanna. Let's start with the following question about Form I-20 issuance for pathway programs:
  - If a pathway program has dual governance, which institution should issue the Form I-20?

**SANNA:**

- The school that grants the pathway program completion credentials should issue the student's Form I-20. This would be the school that determines when a student has successfully completed the pathway program. Section 4.1 of the final policy guidance notes that the school must list any location where a student may receive instruction for any portion of a pathway program as an instructional site in SEVIS.

**LAUREN:**

- Thanks for that response. Keeping on a similar topic, here's our next question:
  - Will the Form I-20 include a pathway program level or indication?

**ANISHA:**

- Currently, SEVP does not have plans to add an indicator to the Form I-20 for a pathway program. DSOs must issue the student's Form I-20 at the "Other" education level for the duration the student is enrolled in a pathway program.

**Slide 32: Pre-Submitted Question**

**LAUREN:**

- Thanks, Anisha. Onto our next question:
  - Almost all U.S. colleges and universities require incoming domestic and international students to take math and English placement tests. All accepted international students must meet the college's English proficiency standards for admission. However, many of these students must take remedial-level English prior to enrolling in the university's regular-level English programs. Should DSOs create a Form I-20 for students that take remedial level English?



## **SANNA:**

- There are three possible scenarios that can address this question:
  - If the student is maintaining their full course of study for the degree program and is taking remedial English, the student may do this without receiving a new Form I-20 for the remedial English classes. This can include a reduced course load for academic difficulties, limited to the initial session.
  - If a student is placed into a pathway program that contains credit-bearing components and leads into a degree program at the school, DSOs should issue a Form I-20 for the pathway program.
  - If the student's full course of study consists of remedial English or ESL, DSOs should reissue the student's Form I-20 for the remedial English or ESL program. The student can change their educational level to the academic program upon completion.

## **Slide 33: Pre-Submitted Question**

### **LAUREN:**

- Moving onto the subject of credit requirements for pathway programs, one of our stakeholders submitted the following question:
  - Can SEVP clarify whether or not students enrolled in a pathway program are required to take at least one credit-bearing course each semester or session? The final policy guidance on pathway programs states that, "all pathway programs must contain credit-bearing coursework that is transferrable to the curricular requirements of a certified degree program." This statement seems to indicate the "per session" requirement mentioned earlier in draft guidance is no longer required.

### **ANISHA:**

- The pathway program must contain credit-bearing coursework within the prescribed program of study or curriculum, but not necessarily during each session.



## Slide 34: Pre-Submitted Question

### LAUREN:

- Staying on a similar topic, what are the minimum number of credits that a student must take at the college level to be eligible for a pathway program?

### SANNA:

- With this question, we're going to interpret it as asking about the required number of college credits that need to be taken during a pathway program. A student enrolled in a pathway program must take a combination of ESL and credit-bearing coursework. The student must maintain a full course of study as it applies to credit or clock hour programs. There are no limitations as to what proportion of the pathway program needs to consist of credit-bearing coursework.

## Slide 35: Pre-Submitted Question

### LAUREN:

- Our next question is:
  - Does credit-bearing coursework in the pathway program need to count towards the student's eventual degree? My school has several graduate-level pathway programs where credit-bearing courses do not count toward the student's degree requirements, even though the courses appear on the student's transcript. Should we change these types of programs?

### ANISHA:

- As noted in the policy guidance document, credit-bearing courses must count toward the curricular requirements of an SEVP-certified degree program. This includes, core, general education, major, minor or any other coursework that would count toward the curricular requirements of the student's SEVP-certified degree program of study.



## **Slide 36: Pre-Submitted Question**

### **LAUREN:**

- Let's move on to questions regarding situations about SEVP certification for pathway programs.
- In this person's situation, a regionally accredited university offers a licensed, accredited and SEVP-certified ESL program. A third party delivers the ESL program, which makes up part of the university's pathway program. So can the university add this pathway program to its Form-17 when the university governs the pathway program, but a third party provider delivers the ESL portion of the pathway program?

### **ANISHA:**

- SEVP understands that many schools contract out or have arrangements with other parties for certain courses of study or curriculums, particularly ESL studies. The party that governs the program must list the pathway program on its Form I-17. The university can add such a program to its Form I-17 for review. During the adjudication process, SEVP will assess the governance of the program, among other details, and make a determination on the program's eligibility for SEVP certification.

## **Slide 37: Pre-Submitted Question**

### **LAUREN:**

- We received quite a few questions from community colleges that wondered what effect the guidance will have on their pathway programs. This submitted asks the following:
  - The function of many community colleges is similar to that of a pathway program — students may begin their studies with for-credit ESL coursework and later transition to courses that fulfill their degree requirements. However, admission requirements for community colleges differ from other universities. Community colleges generally do not require proof of English language proficiency to admit students since the college provides English instruction. Therefore, students applying to community colleges can meet all standards for admission even without any proof of language proficiency. Does SEVP consider community colleges a pathway program and does the recent guidance apply to them?



## **SANNA:**

- SEVP does not automatically consider community colleges to be pathway programs. A school can choose to not require English proficiency for admission and may issue Forms I-20 for programs of study other than pathway programs without English proficiency.
- However, a community college may also offer programs that meet the criteria for a pathway program. If a student takes a combination of courses that meet the definition of a pathway program and will enter the full degree program upon completion of the initial portion, this situation would meet the requirements of a pathway program as stated in the guidance.

## **Slide 38: Pre-Submitted Question**

### **LAUREN:**

- And, onto our final question, which is also related to community colleges.
  - If a student finishes ESL courses at a community college on a language training Form I-20, takes placement courses for regular-level English and places low on the exam, our school recommends that the student enroll in half degree-seeking courses and half high-level ESL courses. Does SEVP consider this situation a pathway program?

### **SANNA:**

- As described, such a program could qualify as a pathway program. We suggest you submit the program to SEVP for adjudication of the details of your proposal. The final policy guidance document contains instructions for how to submit a pathway program to SEVP for approval.

## **Slide 39: Helpful Resources**

### **LAUREN:**

- Well, that was an informative segment. Thanks Sanna and Anisha for taking the time to provide us with such great information. I'm sure that those watching appreciate your information about the guidance.
- As Sanna noted, if you have additional questions related to the pathway programs guidance, please direct them to the SRC. That contact information is located in your



[hyperlink appendix](#) and at the end of this presentation. We'll also post a document with the questions and answers that we just discussed to the [Stakeholder Webinars](#) page after the event.

- Before we wrap up today's webinar, I want to briefly highlight some recent updates to [Study in the States](#). Marissa, I know we mentioned this in our Facts and Figures section, but can you tell us about the new [Study in the States](#) home page?

## Slide 40: New Study in the States Home Page

### MARISSA:

- Sure thing! Those of you visiting [Study in the States](#) probably noticed that we updated our home page last week. The new home page increases visibility for key information and announcements — right now, you'll see a reminder to complete the annual verification in SEVIS. It also makes it easier to locate key resources, such as the [SEVIS Help Hub](#).

### LAUREN:

- Thanks, Marissa. I'm sure many attendees are familiar with our closing slides. But, Tandice, could you remind those watching how they can stay connected and engage with SEVP?

## Slide 41: Engage with SEVP

### TANDICE:

- As Marissa noted, we've got a lot of great resources available on [Study in the States](#) and our social media pages that will allow our stakeholders to stay informed about the latest news coming from SEVP.
- Some specific things that we want to highlight are the quarterly SEVP Spotlight and the monthly Outreach Bulletin.

### LAUREN:

- And just a quick reminder: how can DSOs receive the Spotlight and Bulletin?

### TANDICE:

- The SEVP Spotlight is posted on [Study in the States](#).



- The Outreach Bulletin – folks can send an email to [SEVPOutreach@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVPOutreach@ice.dhs.gov) and we would be happy to add you to our distribution list! There's also a sign-up option on the Study in the States [Conferences](#) page where you can simply submit your email and we'll add you to the distribution list.
- Speaking of the [Conferences](#) page, you can also submit event requests to SEVP and other government partners on that page if your school, or any association you are a member of, have upcoming events where you would like us to present.

**LAUREN:**

- And finally, don't forget that we frequently post on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, so be sure to connect with us on those platforms as well!

## Slide 42: SEVP Values Your Feedback

**LAUREN:**

- As we near the end of this webinar, I'd like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that we would love to hear your thoughts about today's session, as well as any other events you attend where SEVP presents.
- Remember to take our [Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey](#) following this webinar so that we can continue to improve for future webinars!
- If you refer to our [hyperlink appendix](#), there's a direct link to the survey in there – it's also on the slide now, too.

## Slide 43: SEVP Contact Information

**LAUREN:**

- And finally, don't forget that there are numerous ways to get in touch with SEVP.
- The SRC is open Monday to Friday from 8 am. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time, except on holidays.

**MARISSA:**

- Yes and we do want to note that the SRC has adjusted hours on Wednesdays for system maintenance. The SRC is closed every Wednesday for a short period starting at 12:50 p.m. but resumes operations after 1:30 p.m. Eastern Time.



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**LAUREN:**

- Thanks for that reminder, Marissa!
- And just another reminder to our viewers: you can always reach out to us via the email addresses you see on the screen.
- Well, I believe that just about covers it. Marissa, Tandice, Sanna, and Anisha – thank you so much for providing such great updates today, and everyone else – thank you for joining us.
- Have a great day!